

November 29, 1954

Mr. John E. Kimber, President
Kimber Farms, Inc.
Niles, California

Dear Mr. Kimber:

Thank you for your letter of the 1st, relating to the Kimber Award in Genetics. I hope you will not consider my response presumptuous, but I am writing on the basis of your statement, closing your letter, that you would be pleased to receive other suggestions.

First, I am sure that every geneticist will be most gratified by your generosity in establishing this award, and we must thank you for it. However, I must add that, with the best of intentions, it may be doing Genetics and the people who work in it a grave disservice. Scientists are far too human in their frailties, and it will be difficult for anyone who might regard himself as a potential candidate to ignore such a magnificent sum as \$10,000 tax-free! I am sure that your intentions are to reward unselfish service and devotion to scientific objectives and social benefits, but I fear that a byproduct will be conscious or unconscious competition for the monetary reward. One of the most disquieting features of the way in which the scientific profession is evolving these days is the increasing emphasis on success in terms of large laboratories and administrative empires; science is, unfortunately, getting to be less and less different from business for profit, and I would deplore any move that might encourage the trend further.

There are a number of ways in which genetic research might be advanced by thoughtful altruism. I would say that research funds themselves are becoming more nearly adequate, as compared to 10 years ago, and would not suggest research grants. However, financial limitations have been very cramping on the facilities for publication. A grant of \$10,000 to the journal GENETICS for expansion of its present operations, or for setting up a section for publication of timely reviews, would be one of the timeliest and rewarding investments, and one for which there is real need. If you are intent on a means of recognition of personal achievement, I would only plead that you reconsider the terms of its administration, for example by reducing the award to a more nominal figure (which would still attract public attention) of perhaps \$1000 or, at maximum, \$2000. This might, or might not, then also allow for a more frequent bestowal, if this were desirable.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg

Professor of Genetics